

## *The South Capitol Gateway and Corridor Improvement Study* **DRAFT**



Washington, D.C. encapsulates America's history and democratic ideals in physical form. At the dawn of the 21st century, the transformation of the city's southeast and southwest quadrants through the Anacostia Waterfront Initiative represents the most comprehensive vision for Washington since the Federal City's creation. The role of the South Capitol Street Corridor as a hinge pin for the area's entire street network underscores why it must be an inviting, ceremonial gateway to the city's Monumental Core. Only then can it help restore

vitality to its adjoining neighborhoods. This study identifies the critical decisions that must be made and the projects that should be built to meet this objective. This effort has evolved within the context of ongoing planning work that will determine the means to revitalize the corridor's communities with private investment, open green spaces, and cultural facilities.



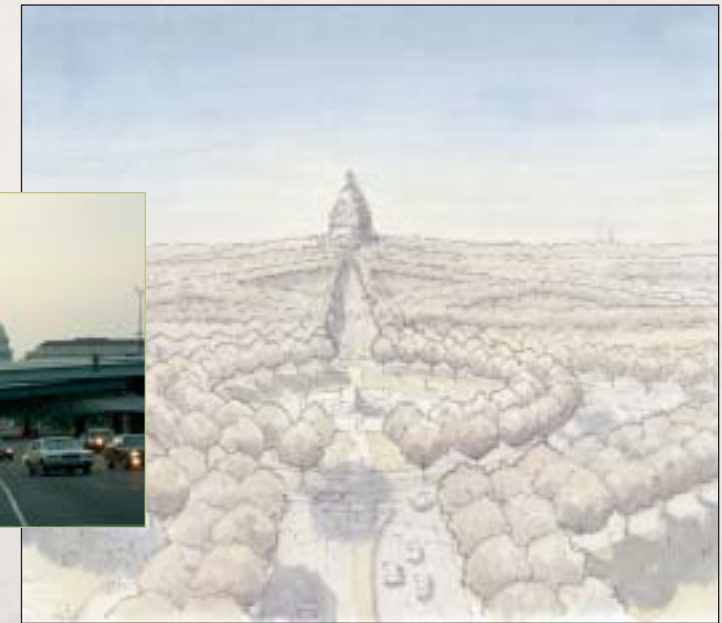
## Goals

- Replace deteriorated Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge with a world-class structure
- Transform South Capitol Street from a neglected corridor into a gracious urban gateway with the qualities worthy of a world-class capital city.
- Provide an efficient, convenient, and visually pleasing transportation system that connects surrounding neighborhoods and handles commuter trips with minimal disruption to local residents.
- Accommodate transit, cyclists, and pedestrians by removing barriers and building at-grade intersections with crosswalks, traffic signals, and roundabouts.
- Link South Capitol Street physically and aesthetically to Washington's Monumental Core by creating a ceremonial street that will also provide the appropriate setting for future museums and other public buildings.
- Create transportation infrastructure that will encourage new housing, retail, and other amenities, making South Capitol and its surroundings a wonderful place to live, work, and shop.
- Provide better access from South Capitol Street to both banks of the Anacostia River, including Buzzard Point, Poplar Point, and historic Anacostia.
- Ensure that South Capitol Street enhances both homeland and national security by serving as a multimodal evacuation route in case of emergency.
- Achieve all goals through extensive public involvement, engaging citizens and building consensus in implementing the study's recommendations.

## Findings

- Most of the South Capitol Street Corridor's infrastructure can be transformed into a comprehensive solution to the future's transportation needs by using land already devoted to existing streets and a new tunnel linking I-295 and I-395.
- A new Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge can serve both the aesthetic and functional bond between the banks of the Anacostia River.
- South Capitol Street will not be an urban gateway without removing the Southeast Freeway.
- A network based on a 325-foot wide Zone of Improvements between South Capitol Street and Van or Half Street will handle traffic growth by increasing transportation choices in the network.
- Investing in transit is critical to accommodating future travel demands, which will inevitably increase from new development along the corridor.
- The South Capitol Street/Suitland Parkway/I-295 interchange can be changed to improve traffic safety and access to the Anacostia River.
- Improvements to South Capitol Street will encourage mixed-use development, both along the corridor and in adjacent neighborhoods.
- Vacant and underutilized industrial properties on the east side of South Capitol Street present numerous opportunities to create a series of new parks and public spaces along the gateway.
- Creating a South Capitol Street Gateway will not require the purchase of any private residences because the existing street right-of-way can largely accommodate the needed transportation facilities.

Today, the intersection of South Capitol Street and the Southeast Freeway is a jumble of elevated highway infrastructure. **Imagine** a new South Capitol Street with an unobstructed view of the U.S. Capitol Dome, which reestablishes the Founding Fathers' intention that this gateway serve as a primary entrance to The Federal City.



Today, Half Street SE is a forgotten thoroughfare that accommodates garages, a trash transfer station, and vacant lots. **Imagine** a new Half Street with a multimodal transfer station that accommodates bus, Metrorail, and new surface light rail so that travelers from throughout the city and around the Washington Metropolitan Region can use this new hub of transit as a focal point in their regional travels.



Today, the land adjacent to the Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge is consumed by industrial businesses that prohibit it from being utilized in any other way. **Imagine** a new bridge that meets both shores of the Anacostia River in a way that would attract pedestrians and cyclists to the water's edge.

